

THE TRAIN ROBBERS.

Some Interesting Facts and Incidents Connected with the Recent Outrage.

A Proposition From Frank James to the Writer Indicating His Plans for the Robbery.

The James Boys' Rendezvous and Where They Were Recently Seen.

Correspondence of the Register.

KANSAS CITY, July 25.—Your correspondent arrived in Kansas City on Monday last, the 18th, for the purpose of prosecuting an investigation, not concerning the particulars of the recent train robbery at Winnetka, Missouri, but to discover, if possible, the outlaws were, where they came from, whether they went and how the authorities prosecuted the case. I am glad to say that my efforts have not been without results, as will be seen in the summing up which follows:

I am prepared to state, with circumstantial positiveness, that Frank James and Jim Cummings were the parties who planned, and with the aid of their confederates, executed the robbery at Winnetka, and that the proof may not be waiting the following several facts are recited:

A few weeks ago I received a letter from Frank James acknowledging the receipt of a copy of my late publication, "Border Outlaws," which I sent to him by a relative. This letter has already been published. Shortly after its receipt this same relative, who is known to be in communication with Frank James, visited St. Louis and confidentially conferred with my publisher upon the advantages which we might mutually reap by a sudden stimulation in the sale of "Border Outlaws," for which he was then acting as agent. His proposition embraced a statement that Frank James and Jim Cummings were at that time in Missouri planning a campaign; that a large robbery would soon be consummated, attended with some startling results. All these facts he agreed to furnish us with the very moment the robbery should be completed, comprising the names of those engaged, and how they had organized, where assembled, and for their acts, etc., provided my publisher would give him a certain sum of money. The incentive on our part to comply with his proposition was in securing this reliable information, which was added to as an appendix to a new addition of "Border Outlaws," and issued contemporaneously with the first newspaper reports, thereby creating a large increase in demand for the book. Of course there appeared some much doubt involved in this singular proposition that it was rejected with little consideration of the probability of a robbery such as was declared about to take place. At this time, however, the assertions then made assume an interest which throws much light upon the problem, "Who committed the robbery?"

But this is not all the evidence I am in possession of concerning this latest defilement of Missouri's good name. In pursuing my investigations I have visited Olathe, Kansas, twenty miles south of Kansas City, and there found a gentleman, well known in that town, who had met Frank James walking on the south side of Olathe's public square, well armed, on the 10th inst., or only five days before the robbery occurred. It was not a mistaken identity for the gentleman in question was raised in four miles of the present residence of the James boys' parents, and was for years on terms of the greatest social intimacy with them, attending the same school, and participating in the same sports, and in later years meeting with them as old acquaintances. Being well acquainted myself in Olathe, I can positively state that this information regarding the presence of Frank James in the town referred to is true beyond all doubt. But what his business was, or when he left I could not ascertain.

Mrs. Samuel, mother of the James boys, was in Kansas City on yesterday and also on Tuesday, presumably having been called there by the discovery of her son's whereabouts by Jackson county authorities to apprehend the gang. She was very positive in her declarations that both Frank and Jesse were dead, going so far in her assertions as to say that Frank died three years ago of consumption, in Texas. What she hoped to gain by a claim so easily disproved it is difficult to conjecture.

The rendezvous of Frank James many know is in the Indian nation, on the headwaters of the Sandy river, near Atoka. A well known gentleman of St. Louis, whose business for the last several months has kept him in the nation, informed me some days ago that he had seen Frank James and several of his confederates more than fifty times during the present year, and always within a hundred miles or less of Atoka. This section of the nation is distinguished for the lawless characters that infest it, murder and robbery being the chief occupation of nearly every one in that particular section of country. It is, in fact, almost impossible for a gentleman to pass through the district without a large and well armed escort. In such haunts the James boys feel secure from official interference.

From the best evidence attainable, the gang who robbed the Rock Island & Pacific train, among whom were Frank James, Ed Miller, Jim Cummings and Dick Little, after leaving the train mounted their horses and rode northward until they reached the outskirts of Cameron when they turned and took to the brush again, making directly for the Missouri river. Just where they made a crossing it is impossible to state, but on the following evening the 16th, they certainly passed through the country of township of Jackson county, and taking a southwesterly course, continued on to the Indian territory. The party, however, did not remain intact, but divided up into couples, so as to destroy the trail which so large a number as seven riders would have made conspicuous. They were at no time so far apart, though, but that a pre-arranged signal would have concentrated

the outlaws. Such a force disciplined in desperation and schooled so well in the use of arms would be capable of repelling any attack liable to be made by a sheriff's posse.

Without intending any invidious reflections upon the officers who pretend to have been searching for the outlaws, candor and earnestness into the belief that these pursuers entertained no real desire to corral the robbers; it has been with the possess much like the experience of an amateur hunter in search of a grizzly; very anxious until the game is in sight or run to cover, when anxiety degenerates into doubtful propriety.

It is a singular fact that with all the atrocious crimes credited to the James boys and their confederates, there is not so much as one dollar of a reward offered for their capture, although at one time the rewards offered by state, railroad and express companies aggregated \$75,000. During Gov. Hardin's administration nearly all the rewards offered by the state were withdrawn.

The private corporations that had the \$75,000 so seriously at the hands of the outlaws, they had advertised the figures remaining, so that now there is no reward standing for the apprehension of any of the outlaws.

A proposition is now being discussed by some of Kansas City's leading citizens looking to the formation of a fund by private subscription—any \$50,000, the amount not considered.

When raised to be a reward for the production of the bodies of Frank James, Jesse James, Jim Cummings and Dick Little, dead or alive.

This, sum, it is thought, can be easily secured by appealing to the state, railroad and express companies, to which contributions from all the law-loving citizens of Missouri will be added.

Only excellent, but unduly practical, and by putting a "border outlaw" would surely be exterminated, root and branch.

J. W. BUCK.

A WEALTHY COLORADO MAN.

How He Struck a Streak of Luck After Hard Work in the Mountains.

Denver Correspondence. St. Louis (Globe) "temo-"

"It's a remarkable fact," said a prominent citizen of Denver, "that nearly all the strikes in the mines of Colorado have been made by republicans. I cannot recall an instance in which a democrat has struck a bonanza." The speaker was himself a republican, and I feared that he might be biased in his judgment by his political convictions, so I laid the matter before a lynx-eyed democrat for explanation.

"Four republican friends does not state the case correctly," was the rejoinder. "I think the record will show that as many mines have been discovered in this state by democrats as by republicans within the last five years, but somehow, whenever a democrat makes a big strike he suddenly blossoms out as a republican." Then he buys a newspaper and begins to set up the pins for an election to the United States senate. Now then, if a democrat is a republican, he is a democrat as anybody; but when he cleared a million in Little Pitkin he became the staunchest lieutenant-governor, and is now a dark horse in the race for Senator Teller's seat. He's pretty apt to get the place, too, for when he goes in, he goes in to win."

This ringing in of Tabor's name is a part of every well regulated conversation in Colorado, but more especially in Denver, where the buildings and banks attest his greatness and the citizens all sing his praises. The Tabor block, on Sixteenth street, is the pride of the city, and the Tabor opera house, which will be opened on September 5th, promises to surpass anything of the kind west of Chicago. The Tabor mansion, in the suburbs, is regarded as a palace by the admiring natives, and the Tabor real estate is more highly thought of in Denver than the Astor acres or the Trinity church property in New York.

But if Tabor is great in Denver, he is pre-eminent in Leadville, where all his vast wealth was dug from the bowels of Fryer Hill. There his stamp-mills, and smelters and opera house shine with a glory quite unknown in lesser altitudes. I had heard so much about Tabor's mines and Tabor's buildings and Tabor's schemes from the time I crossed the line which separates total abstinence from drink-as-you-please Colorado, that I was quite anxious to meet the bonanza king face to face. My curiosity was amply gratified today. By the courtesy of Gov. Pitkin I occupied a place on the balcony of the state house while the splendid military companies of Denver and Leadville passed in review under the executive eye. A number of the state officers assisted the governor, and among them was Lieut. Governor Tabor, arrayed in the uniform of the Tabor Guards, his strong, bony head surmounted by a little skull-cap, apparently two sizes too small. His warmest admirers would not call Mr. Tabor either handsome or graceful. He is apparently about 55 years old, his hair is black and coarse as an Indian's, and his large mouth is covered, rather than ornamented, by a heavy mustache, which is slightly tinged with gray, his arms seemed made of wood and his joints of iron, and it is very evident that he does not feel at all at home in a military uniform. In conversation with this luckiest of men soon forgot his peculiarities of manner and appearance. There is so much straightforwardness and strong common sense in what he says that no one who knows him wonders that he has become one of the greatest masters of the great art of money-making.

His history is one of the romances of mining. Twenty-two years ago, when the "Pike's Peak or bust" fever was at its height, Tabor and his wife left their hungry home in Maine to seek a fortune in the wild west. They didn't find it. For eighteen weary years they went up and down the foot-hills and mountains of Colorado, pursuing the phantom gold and growing old and discouraged in their tireless and fruitless search. He was sober and she thrifty, but somehow they did not get on in the world.

Now when they have more millions than they had hundreds then, Mrs. Tabor delights in telling how "me and Tabor" moved in an ox-team across the park from Denver to Oro City, where they started a little store for the sale of miners' supplies. Oro City was a small camp about two miles from Leadville, now flourishing, and where the first discovery of quartz was made in Leadville. Tabor "grub-staked" two prospectors, August Rische and George Fryer, to search for ore, on the condition that he should have half of all they should discover. The first ore they found ran only eight ounces to the ton, but as they went down on "Little Pitkin" the quality steadily improved. About this time Leadville had outgrown Oro City, and Tabor moved his store to the larger place. He came to Denver and bought a bill of goods amounting to \$2,500, and not having money enough to settle, he offered his share in the mine to the Denver firm, but they preferred to take their chances on getting their money back when he disposed of the mine. Later he bought \$3,700 worth of goods from another firm, and actually succeeded in inducing them to take his half of Little Pitkin in payment. When he reached home, however, he received a letter from the firm asking him to take back his mine, as they had no desire to go into that kind of business, and assuring him that they would trust him for the bill. Well they might, for within three months he had bought out both his partners for about \$150,000, paying them out of the proceeds of the mine, and had in turn sold out to Chas. Moffat & Co. for \$100,000.

In all he made about \$1,300,000 on the mine, which was then stocked at \$200,000,000 yielded some \$5,000,000 to its new purchasers, and is now an empty ruin so far as appearances go. Thousands of people in all parts of the country who bought this stock at fancy prices, and who believed that they would make 1,000 per cent. on the investment now feel that they were deceived and robbed by the clever man who manipulated the shares; but to a disinterested outsider it looks as if the duplicity of the sellers would have proved fruitless but for the unhealthy greed of the buyers. So far as I know, Tabor had nothing to do with the stock deal, but Chas. Moffat, who got the credit of engineering that gigantic scheme, and was very heartily hated for it in some places, are very wealthy and highly respected citizens of Denver. Since the Little Pitkin strike, everything that Tabor has touched has turned to gold. His interest are scattered in every direction throughout the state, and, if this whimsical cross-roads storekeeper couldn't find enough to occupy his mind in Colorado, he rushes off to New York very soon and then he has some fun with the boys in Wall street. When he first turned up at that centre of sharp practice they took him for a gony who had made his money easily and would part with it readily. In other words, they "played him for a sucker," and they will never make that kind of a mistake in his case again.

He has developed a talent for handling vast sums of money, and money that surprises all but those who used to play 10-cent draw-poker with him in the old days. One of these, dressed in brown canvas, speaking of Tabor's luck and judgment, the other said: "He orace was the best 10-cent poker-player in the camp. He always knew when to come in and when to stay out, when to bluff and when to lay down. When a man knows these things in a game he is able to hold his own, and make his way anywhere if he ever gets a chance." The speaker evidently either didn't know "them things" or his character hasn't come yet. Tabor's wealth is now variously estimated between \$4,000,000 and \$10,000,000, but it is doubtful if even he could state its exact figure. Notwithstanding his sudden leap from poverty to millions, he is as plain and approachable as ever. His only son and heir is one of the lessees of the Windsor hotel, and is said to be a shrewd, level-headed young man. Mrs. Tabor delights in fine clothes, diamonds, and New England grammar, and is now enjoying a tour of Europe. Ex-Gov. Routt, ex-Senator Chaffee, Mr. John P. Hill, and Mr. Palmer, of the Denver and Rio Grande railway, are next to Gov. Tabor, the leading millionaires of the Centennial State, at present. With the exception of Evans and Palmer, these men have all made their vast fortunes in mining within the last ten years. Evans and Palmer made their money in railroad building, but if it were not for the mines their roads would never have been built.

Colorado is full of prospective millionaires, and one can't help being amused at times by the buoyant hopefulness of men who could not borrow \$50 to save them from starvation, and yet vow that they would not sell their mining prospects for \$50,000. This extravagant hopefulness seems to be in the very air. Nobody ever seems to despair in Colorado, and suicide is a crime almost unknown here. Now and then a stranger shoots off the mortal coil before the air and sunshine of these higher altitudes have had time to cure the distemper in his blood, but the oldest inhabitant when pinched by hunger or pursued by poverty, just thinks of the Tabor and Robinsons, and Chaffees, and Routts, smiles serenely and lives on.

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